SCOTTSDALE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION REPORT

To: **Transportation Commission**
From: **Madeline Clemann, Transportation Planning**
               & Transit Operations Manager
Subject: **Proposed East Valley Dial-a-Ride Changes**
Meeting Date: **June 16, 2016**

ITEM IN BRIEF

Action: Transportation Commission endorsement of proposed changes

Purpose: To present the Commission with recommended changes for the East Valley Dial-a-Ride program, and receive a Commission recommendation to City Council.

Key Considerations: Whether or not Scottsdale's Cab Connection voucher subsidy program serves the senior population adequately enough that the East Valley Dial-a-Ride senior program can be eliminated.

Background: The intent of providing transportation for citizens age 65 and over (seniors) that are not disabled began as a means to provide them with basic life needs – grocery shopping, medical appointments, and socialization (trips to senior centers). Many in this age group do not have access to a personal vehicle, choose not to drive, or are not comfortable using bus or trolley services. Two senior transportation programs are now provided by the City of Scottsdale. The two programs, East Valley Dial-a-Ride and Cab Connection, are very similar and somewhat redundant.

East Valley Dial a Ride

East Valley Dial-a-Ride (EVDAR) is a federally-required program for people with disabilities who are unable to use public bus or rail service. The service is available for disabled people who travel from and to a destination within three-quarters of a mile of a fixed route. The service is operated by an independent operator through Valley Metro. Users must undergo an assessment of their ability to ride public transit and be certified to use the service. The assessments are provided by Valley Metro.

Five east valley cities with Valley Metro developed, and then initiated the service in 1999 to comply with federal regulations. Over the years a second EVDAR program went into effect for seniors' age 65+ who are not certified. The program allows seniors' an unlimited number of trips. To qualify to use the service, seniors' must fill out a short application to prove their residency and age. Once qualified, seniors' can book a trip by calling a central call center. In fiscal year 2014-15 14,478 one way trips were taken by Scottsdale's senior residents using EVDAR.

The fare structure for EVDAR is $4.00 each one-way trip with an added per-mile charge of: 50 cents for trips 6 to 15 miles; and $1.00 for trips 16 miles or more.

Cab Connection
Scottsdale has provided subsidized taxi service for senior residents since the 1960's. The City's taxi voucher program, now called Cab Connection, provides over 1,000 City senior residents every month with 16 vouchers (each voucher is good for a one-way trip). In fiscal year 2014-15, 51,168 one-way trips were taken.

The City pays 80 percent of the trip cost up to $10.00. The participant must pay the total amount over $10.00. Generally, Cab Connection trips are less than 6 miles keeping the full cost to the City under $10.00.

The table below offers a comparison of the two systems.

Program Comparison, Annual Averages FY 2014-15

	Cab Connection	Scottsdale EVDAR
Fare/trip	$2.60	$4.70
City cost/trip	$9.23	$9.16
Maximum City Cost	$10.00	Unlimited
Trip length	3.4 miles	4.9 miles
Clients/month	1,064	36
Trips/client	4	7
Trips/month	16	Unlimited

Senior Program Issues
Several concerning issues have been identified relating to program consistency, objectivity, and the inability to contain costs in the EVDAR system.

Costs: Many seniors are not aware of the two programs; however, those that are aware, use Cab Connection for short trips and EVDAR for longer trips. This allows them to pay the lowest fare possible. The cost of each EVDAR trip over 6 miles costs the City between $11.00 and $55.00 instead of the Cab Connection maximum of $10.00. Since EVDAR allows unlimited trips the city cannot control costs of this program. Some seniors take 20 to 50 trips per month on EVDAR, while other seniors make due with 16 cab connection trips per month.

Confusion: There are different scheduling rules and fares for each program (EVDAR ADA, EVDAR senior, and Cab Connection). Whether they are certified ADA or not, participants become confused over which EVDAR program (ADA or senior) to use when scheduling a trip with EVDAR, and become confused over which fare to pay between the three programs. The additional calls for senior service result in periodic overloads for the dispatch center. In addition, since ADA trips do not have a mileage charge, clients become confused as to which program their trip is scheduled under and argue with drivers when asked to pay the mileage charge. In addition to participant confusion, the EVDAR Call Center personnel also become confused and scheduling mistakes are made, some of which increase the cost to the City of Scottsdale (loss of mileage charge revenues).

What the Data Revealed
A review of data for the two senior programs revealed that of the 66 Scottsdale seniors approved to use EVDAR, 61 of them used the system during the past three months; however, only 35 or 36 in any one month. Of the 61, 19 are also are enrolled in Cab Connection. Over 1,000 participants use Cab Connection vouchers per month.

Four (4) of the Cab Connection participants also took several EVDAR trips of over six (6) miles each during the first nine months of this fiscal year. Each trip over six miles costs the City more than a Cab Connection trip which has a maximum $10.00. The City cost for each of these trips ranged

between $11.69 and $55.14. Compared to Cab Connection, if the EVDAR trips in March 2015 had been taken using Cab Connection vouchers, the City would have saved approximately $3,000.

Proposed Changes and Impacts

The solutions proposed are:

1) Eliminate the EVDAR senior program;

2) Switch the 66 EVDAR seniors to Cab Connection program; and

3) Initiate the Platinum Pass program for EVDAR ADA certified users.

For EVDAR, the changes will reduce confusion for all. It will reduce call center scheduling mistakes and will end fare confusion for the seniors. It will also reduce overloads in the Call Center. The changes will eliminate the $73,000 annual cost of the EVDAR senior program; though not entirely, as a few EVDAR seniors will be able to obtain ADA certification and will continue using EVDAR. Implementing the Platinum Pass for ADA certified participants will help offset the loss of same day trip scheduling ADA certified people now use by scheduling senior program trips.

Seniors moving to the Cab Connection program will enjoy lower fares per trip ($2.60 vs. $4.70); however, for longer trips over six miles the user cost will be higher. The cost of transferring the EVDAR seniors to the Cab Connection program is estimated to be $32,000.

Overall the proposed changes are estimated to result in an overall cost savings of $41,000. Placing a maximum on the City's subsidy and a maximum on the number of trips allowed are cost containment measures that allow the City to provide more services to a larger number of those in need.

Summary and Implementation Schedule

The proposed changes will result in consistent rules for users of senior and ADA programs, which will in turn reduce scheduling mistakes, reduce user confusion, and allow for cost containment. If the Transportation Commission agrees with the staff proposal and recommends to Council, the changes will be initiated in October 2016 with the following tasks:

- June 2016 - Transportation Commission presentation

- June 2016 - Council notification upon Commission recommendation

- July 2016 – Initiate the Platinum Pass program for Scottsdale ADA certified people

- July 2016 - Letter out to 66 EVDAR participants

- July 2016 to September 2016 – receive and process Cab Connection application packages

- October 1, 2016 - Implement Change